UNSPEAKABLE REBEL SUPERWEAPON: RAGE OF KRRSANTAN

UNSPEAKABLE REBEL SUPERWEAPON
Part III

Rogue archaeologist Doctor Aphra has made a name for herself as a brilliant scientist...as well as a thief, swindler and obtainer of ancient valuable artifacts.

But she's also collected quite a few enemies--the Rebellion and the Empire, to name but two. Though the rebels kidnapped Aphra and her ward, Vulaada, they are willing to put their differences aside due to Aphra's latest score--a Jedi weapon called the FARKILLER.

Using plans stolen from the Empire, General Cracken has a secret scheme to create the Rebellion's own Death Star using the weapon and with Aphra's help. But Aphra has no intentions of joining the Rebel forces....

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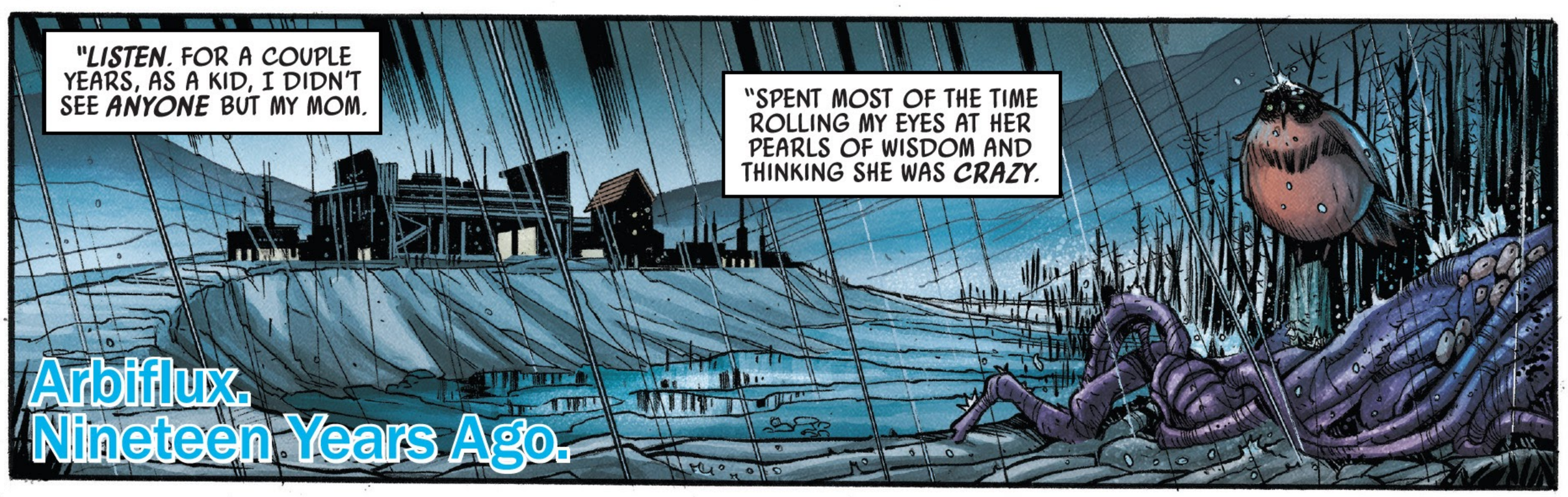
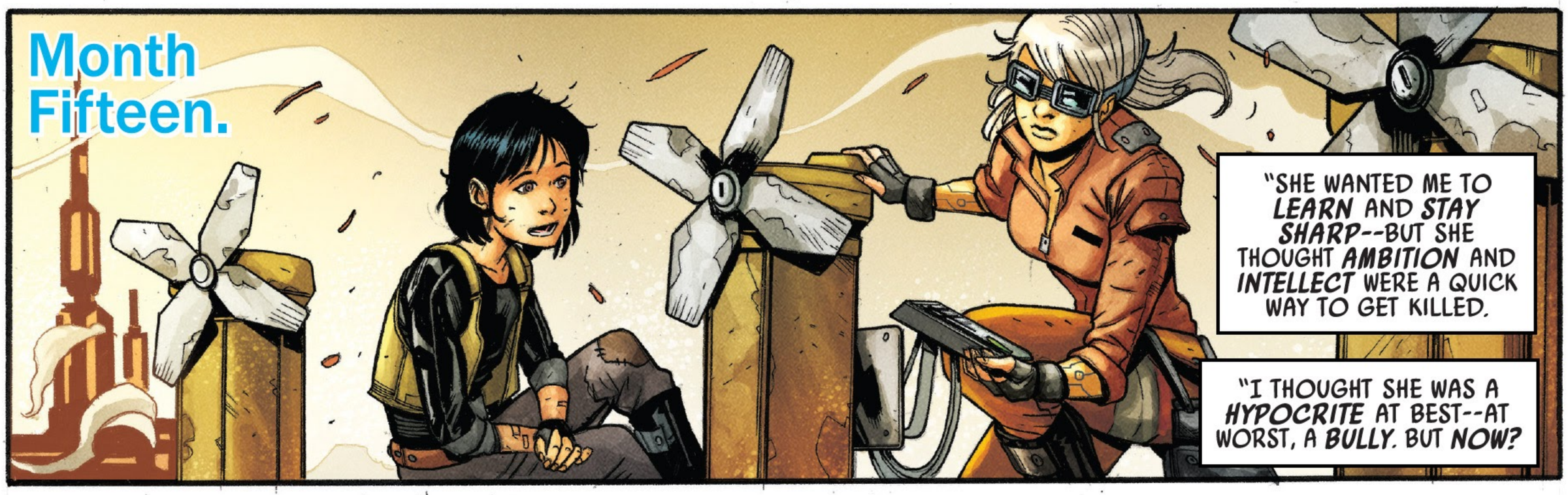

"LISTEN. FOR A COUPLE YEARS, AS A KID, I DIDN'T SEE ANYONE BUT MY MOM.
"SPENT MOST OF THE TIME ROLLING MY EYES AT HER PEARLS OF WISDOM AND THINKING SHE WAS CRAZY.
Arbiflux. Nineteen Years Ago.

Month Three.
"FOR INSTANCE, SHE THOUGHT EVIL WAS ABOUT TAKING AWAY PEOPLE'S CHOICES--
"--BUUUUT SHE'D STOLEN ME FROM DAD AND MADE ME A FARTBIRD FARMER WITHOUT STOPPING TO ASK.

Month Nine.
"SHE SAID EVERYONE SHOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE THEIR OWN MISTAKES-- 'HOW ELSE ARE YOU GONNA LEARN?'--
"--BUT SHE WOULDN'T LET ME TRY ANYTHING WORTH TRYING.


Month Fifteen.
"SHE WANTED ME TO LEARN AND STAY SHARP--BUT SHE THOUGHT AMBITION AND INTELLECT WERE A QUICK WAY TO GET KILLED.
"I THOUGHT SHE WAS A HYPOCRITE AT BEST--AT WORST, A BULLY. BUT NOW?

"NOW I THINK SHE WAS JUST TERRIFIED BY HOW MUCH SHE LOVED ME. I THINK SHE TWISTED HER MIND FOR EXCUSES TO KEEP ME SAFE.
"YOU CAN'T CONTROL ANYTHING IN THIS GALAXY--SHE KNEW THAT--SO SHE BURIED US IN A PLACE SO INSIGNIFICANT NOTHING WOULD EVER, EVER CHANGE."
Month Twenty-Four.

Arbiflux.
Now.
I GUESS SHE WAS WRONG ABOUT *THAT* TOO.
TRY NOT TO FEEL *TOO* BAD, APHRA.
YOU PROMISED ME A *BORING PLANET* WITH A *FOUL SMELL* AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I GOT. EXCEPT...NOW IT'S GOT BONUS *BAD GUYS*.
OH, *LOOK*, I THINK THERE'S A *STORM* COMING TOO.
AS *HIDEOUTS* GO, IT'S VERY *YOU*.

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Then.
CHELLI.
TH-THE WOODS.
CHELLI, L-LISTEN TO ME. TAKE MY BLASTER. W-WE NEED TO...
CHELLI...?
CHELLI!
FOR VOID'S SAKE, PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER AND RUN!

GUUUH--!

Now.
HHH.
HHH.
HHH.

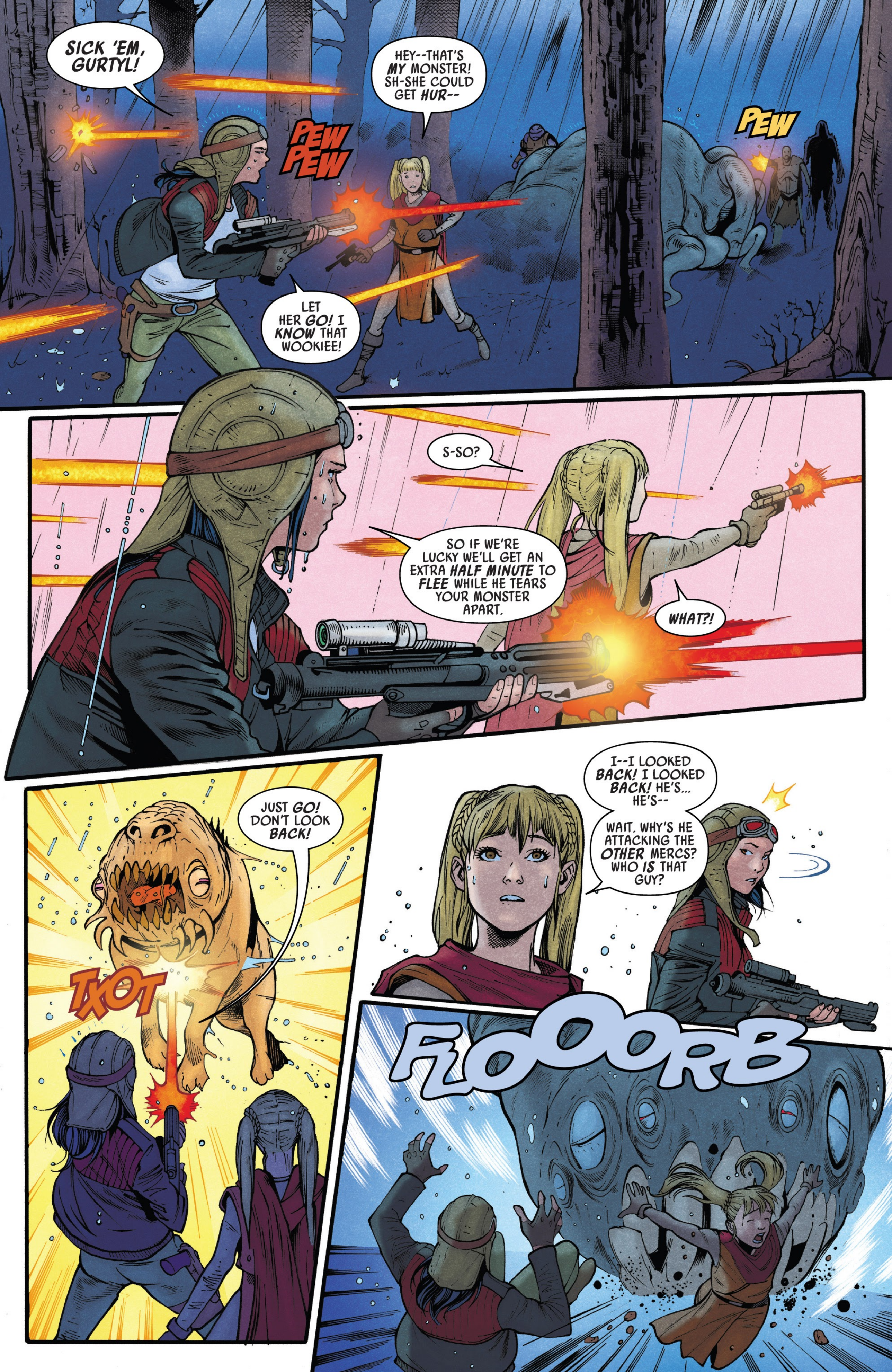
HUH?
WRRRR

--EY'RE COMING. I REPEAT: THEY'RE COMING.
GENERAL CRACKEN...

IF THIS RECORDING REACHES YOU, APHRA--GET OUT. GET OUT NOW. WE INTERCEPTED IMPERIAL COMMS. THEY TRACKED YOU TO ARBIFLUX.
WAKE UP, VU. SHHH.
AND LISTEN, NEWS HAS SPREAD ABOUT THAT SYSTEM CELL GETTING TAKEN OUT AT THE LIVESTOCK MARKET. THEY'LL PLAY IT CAUTIOUS THIS TIME.

FIGURED WE OWED YOU THE WARNING, DOC.

THEY'VE CALLED IN THE MERCS.
NO RUNNING. NOT THIS TIME.
BOUNTY HUNTERS. TH-THREE OF THEM.
I'M TIRED AND I HAVEN'T HAD A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP IN MONTHS AND-- AND IT'S MY DAMN HOME, AFTER ALL! SO--
A DROID, A HERGLIC AND...UH...
A WOOKIEE.
A BIG, COAL-BLACK WOOKIEE.
RUN.


SICK 'EM, GURTYL!
PEW PEW
HEY--THAT'S MY MONSTER! SH-SHE COULD GET HUR--
LET HER GO! I KNOW THAT WOOKIEE!
PEW
S-SO?
SO IF WE'RE LUCKY WE'LL GET AN EXTRA HALF MINUTE TO FLEE WHILE HE TEARS YOUR MONSTER APART.
WHAT?!
JUST GO! DON'T LOOK BACK!
TXOT
I--I LOOKED BACK! I LOOKED BACK! HE'S... HE'S--
WAIT, WHY'S HE ATTACKING THE OTHER MERCS? WHO IS THAT GUY?
FLOORB

Black Krrsantan.
RRRRRAAAAAOOOOOWWWR!

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Then.
GET BAAAAAACK!
M-MOM! I'M NEARLY OUTTA CHARGE. Y-YOU GOT A FRESH CLIP FOR TH--?
HEY. WH-WHO'RE YOU CALLING?
J-JUST...KEEP SHOOTING, LITTLE BOOP. HELP'S COMING.
Y-YOU...
YOU CAN'T...B-BE EXPECTED...
...TO SURVIVE...
...ALONE...

Now.
HRRRAAAOOWWWWUUU!
ARRROOOAAAW!
I AM SHOOTING, YOU SHAMBLING TUFT OF ARMPIT HAIR! KEEP RUNNING! WE'RE NOT FAR FROM THE ARK ANGEL!
WH-WHAT'S HE SAYING?
HE SAYS THERE'S NOWHERE TO RUN. TH-THEY'VE GOT MY FACE IN EVERY GARRISON IN THE GALAXY! HE SAYS THEY'VE UPPED THE BOUNTY ON ME AND--AND--UM...
HAWOO-ARRG-HRRR?
HRRRRRR!
....AND ALL KNOWN ASSOCIATES.
YOU MEAN-- THEY'RE AFTER ME TOO? BUT...BUT I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING!
WE'RE ALL IN IT TOGETHER, KID. YOU STILL WANNA BE MY WARD, DON'TCHA?
HEY! IDIOTS!
I BARELY KNOW THIS WOMAN!

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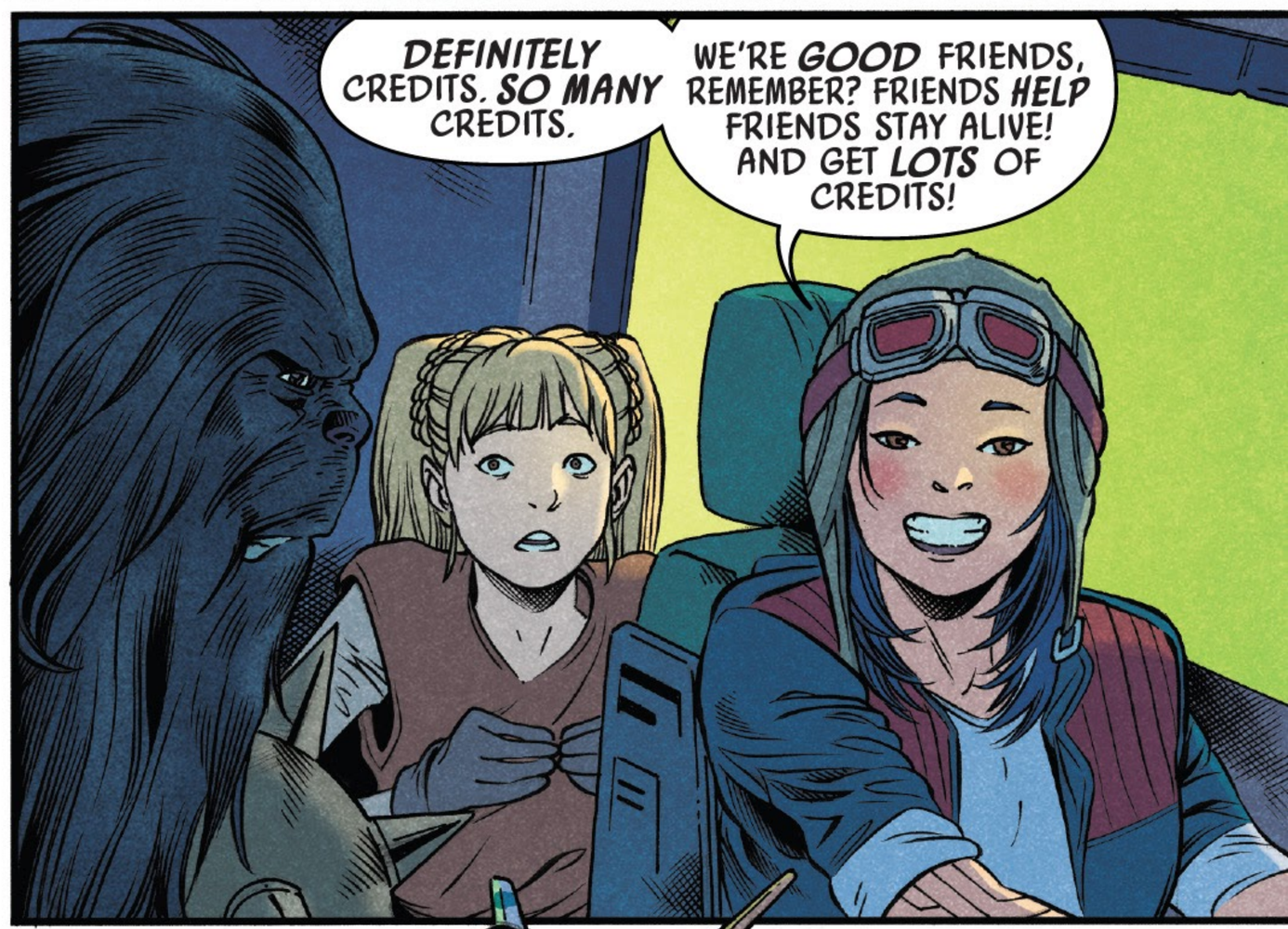
#$%&. NO WONDER SHE HASN'T BEEN ANSWERING THE COMM.
A SETUP. A FAKE JOB TO FLUSH ME OUT.
YOU MEAN THERE'S NO CREDI--

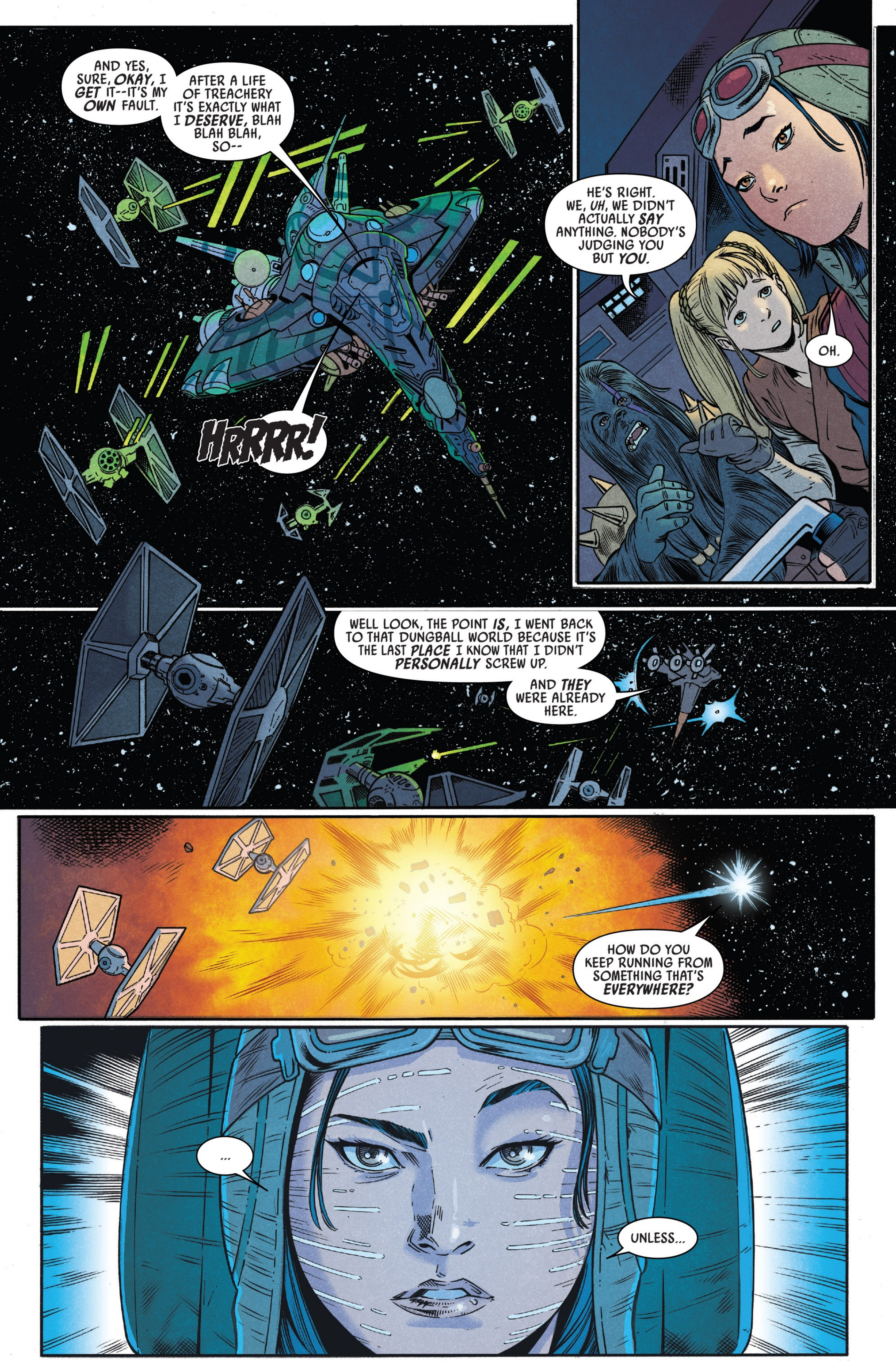
HRRRRRRRR?
=


DEFINITELY CREDITS. SO MANY CREDITS.
WE'RE GOOD FRIENDS, REMEMBER? FRIENDS HELP FRIENDS STAY ALIVE! AND GET LOTS OF CREDITS!

RRRRAAARRRR...
YEAH, YEAH, I SEE 'EM.
LOOK, I JUST--I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY. WHY ALL THIS TROUBLE-- FOR ME?

NRRRR. AAAOOOUU.
=SIGH= I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT. THE "WHY" DOESN'T REALLY MATTER, DOES IT?

WHAT MATTERS IS THAT THEY WON'T STOP.


AND YES, SURE, OKAY, I GET IT--IT'S MY OWN FAULT.
AFTER A LIFE OF TREACHERY IT'S EXACTLY WHAT I DESERVE, BLAH BLAH BLAH, SO--
HRRRR!
HE'S RIGHT. WE, UH, WE DIDN'T ACTUALLY SAY ANYTHING. NOBODY'S JUDGING YOU BUT YOU.
OH.
WELL LOOK, THE POINT IS, I WENT BACK TO THAT DUNGBALL WORLD BECAUSE IT'S THE LAST PLACE I KNOW THAT I DIDN'T PERSONALLY SCREW UP.
AND THEY WERE ALREADY HERE.
HOW DO YOU KEEP RUNNING FROM SOMETHING THAT'S EVERYWHERE?
...
UNLESS...

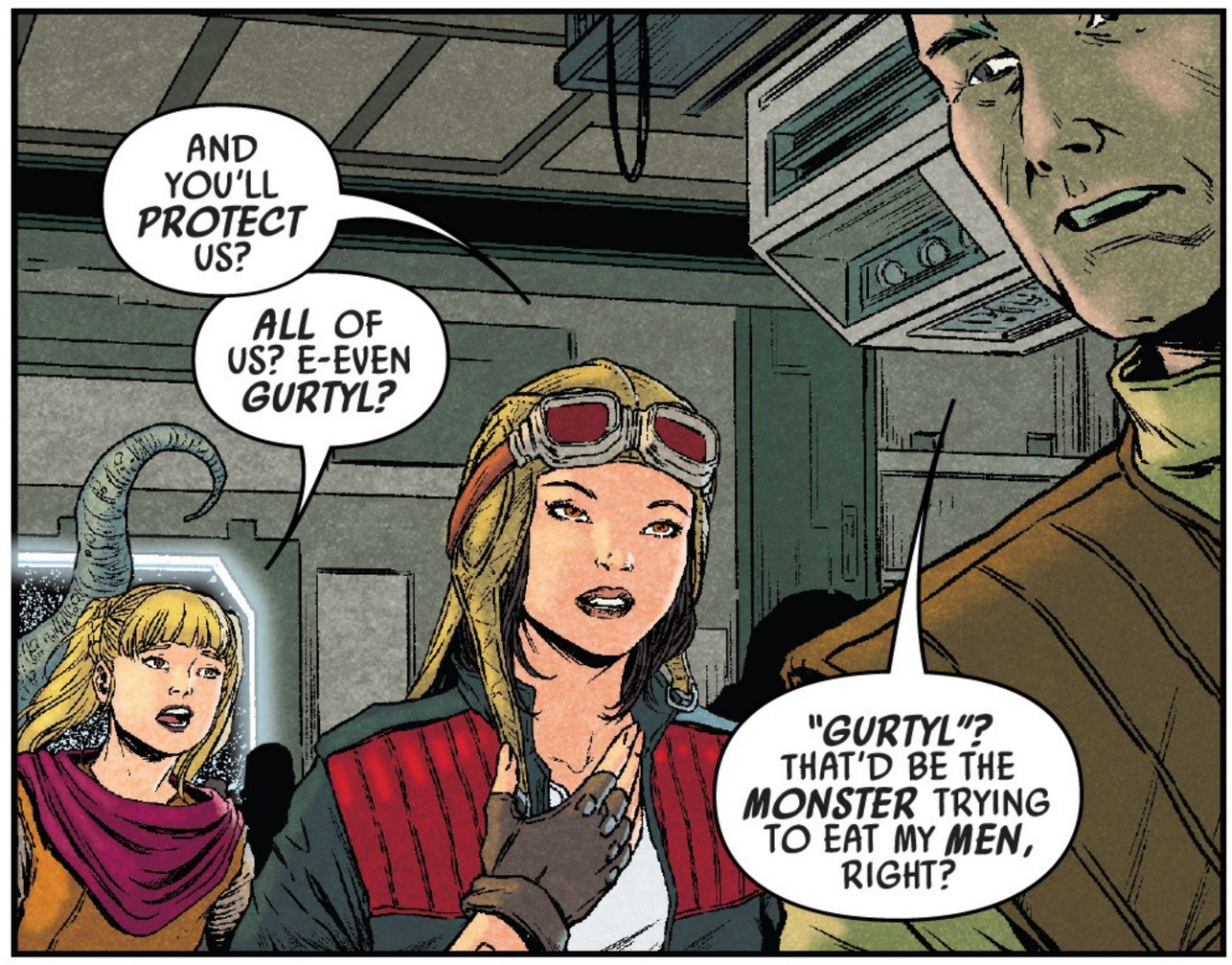
Then.
M-MOM? MOM, THE SUN'S COMING UP. I THINK I SEE SOMETHING MOVING.
Y-YOU THINK THE RAIDERS MIGHT STILL BE LOOKING FOR US, O-OR S--
THEY'RE LONG GONE, KID. YOU'RE SAFE NOW.
YOUR MOM DID THE RIGHT THING--CALLED IT IN. NOW WE KNOW THOSE PIRATES HAVE A BASE HERE.
WH... WH...
C'MON OUTTA THE DITCH. SHE EXPLAINED EVERYTHING. WE'RE SENDING YOU BACK TO YOUR FATHER.
WHAT? NO, I--I DON'T WANT THAT. W-WHY CAN'T I STAY HERE WITH...WITH...
"SOMETHING MY MOM TAUGHT ME. WHEN THERE'S NOWHERE LEFT TO RUN..."

...WHAT MATTERS IS WHO YOU *TURN TO* FOR HELP.

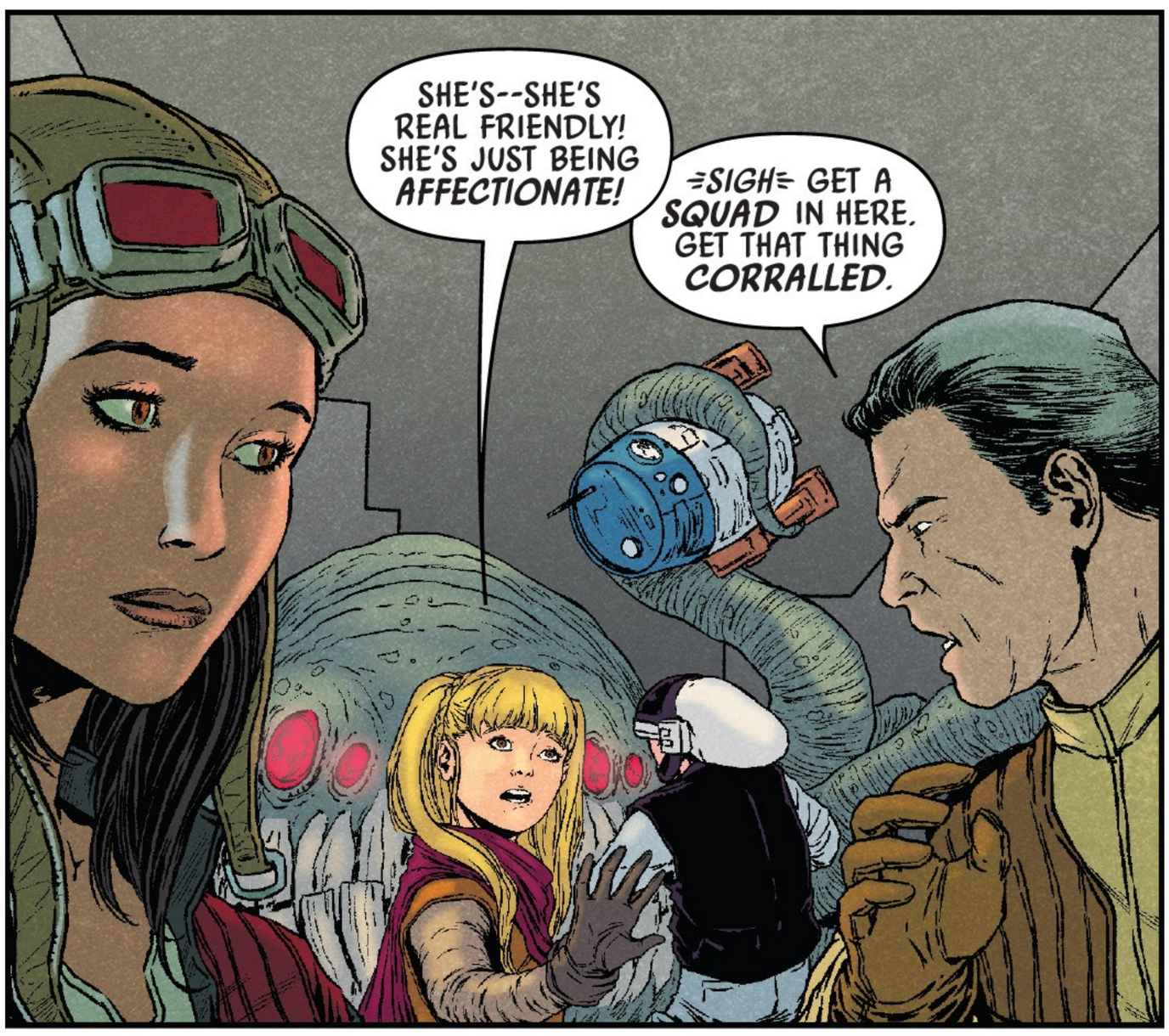
GLAD YOU CHANGED YOUR MIND, DOC.

SEARCH HER SHIP. NO SURPRISES.

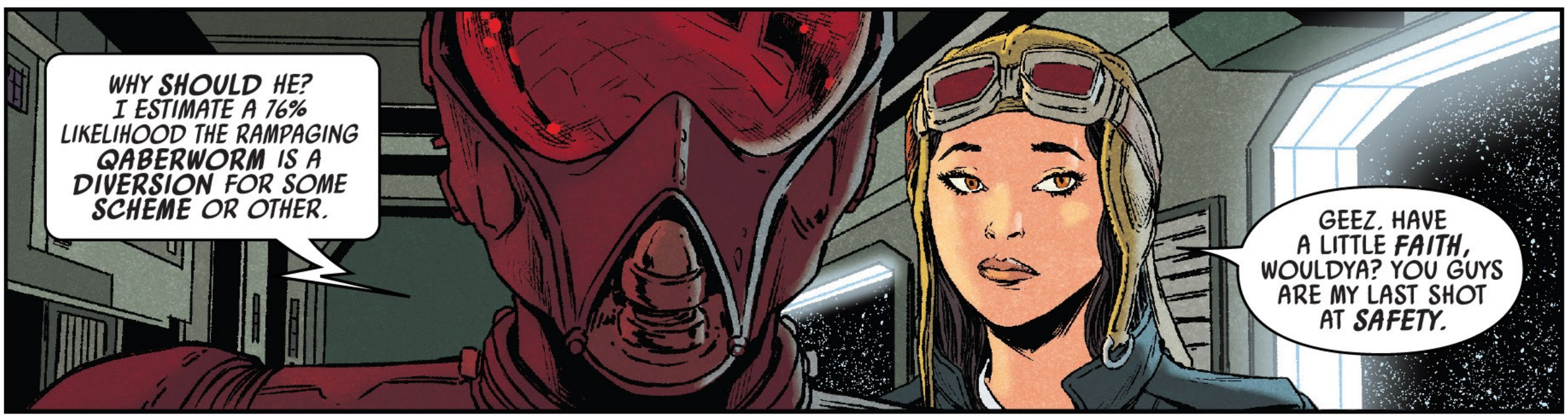
IT'S JUST ME AND THE GIRL, CRACKEN. LISTEN-- THE...UH...THE PLAN WE DISCUSSED--
WE START REVERSE ENGINEERING THE RELIC TOMORROW. Y'KNOW, YOU COULD STILL PLAY A PART IN THAT-- IF YOU WANTED...


AND YOU'LL PROTECT US?
ALL OF US? E-EVEN GURTYL?
"GURTYL"? THAT'D BE THE MONSTER TRYING TO EAT MY MEN, RIGHT?

WHAT?
GURTYL, STOP IT! DOWN!


SHE'S--SHE'S REAL FRIENDLY! SHE'S JUST BEING AFFECTIONATE!
=SIGH= GET A SQUAD IN HERE. GET THAT THING CORRALLED.

TEEZEE-TWO? TAKE APHRA TO THE LAB. AND... WATCH HER, OKAY?
SIR.
DOESN'T TRUST ME, HUH?


WHY SHOULD HE? I ESTIMATE A 76% LIKELIHOOD THE RAMPAGING QABERWORM IS A DIVERSION FOR SOME SCHEME OR OTHER.
GEEZ. HAVE A LITTLE FAITH, WOULDYA? YOU GUYS ARE MY LAST SHOT AT SAFETY.

I'D HAVE TO BE *CRAZY* TO RISK THAT.

MIGHT I **REMIND** YOU THE LAST TIME WE MET YOU PLANTED TWO SOPHISTICATED **HIJACK UNITS** ONTO MY CHASSIS?

DROIDS HAVE LITTLE USE FOR FAITH, DOCTOR--BUT IN THE REBELLION, **TRUST** MUST BE EARNED.

THAT WHY YOU'RE KEEPING YOUR BIG SCARY *GUN* A SECRET FROM YOUR *BOSSES?*

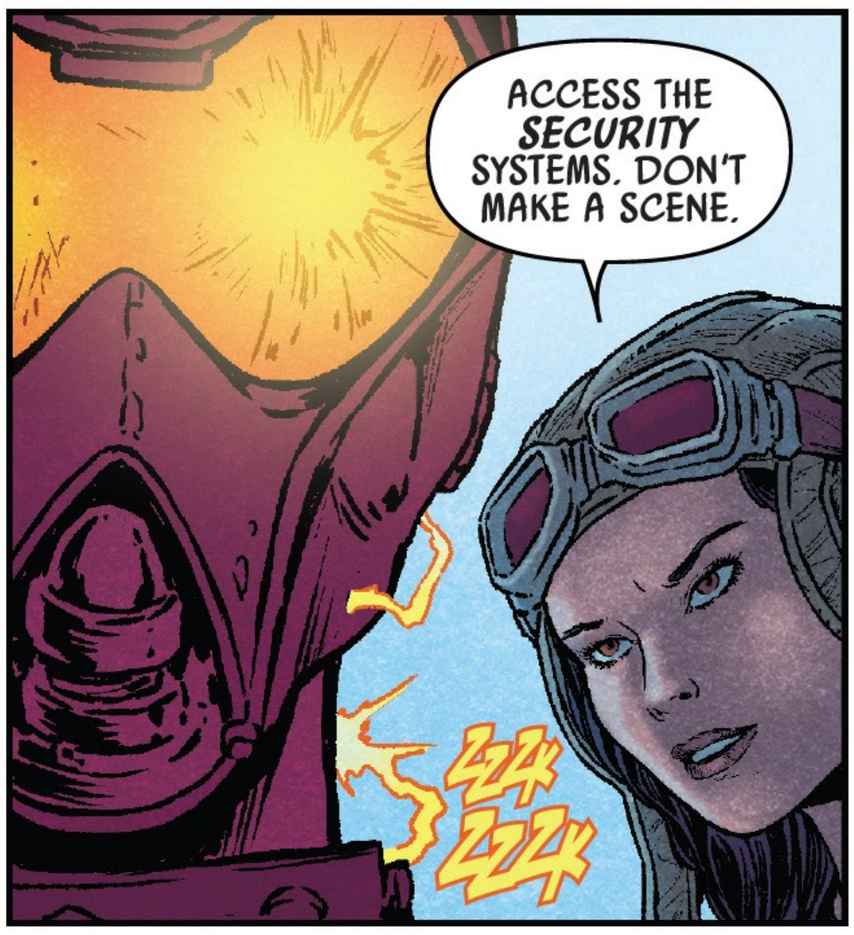
HAVING **EARNED** THAT TRUST, ONE FEELS ONE HAS **LICENSE** TO MAKE--**DIFFICULT** DECISIONS.

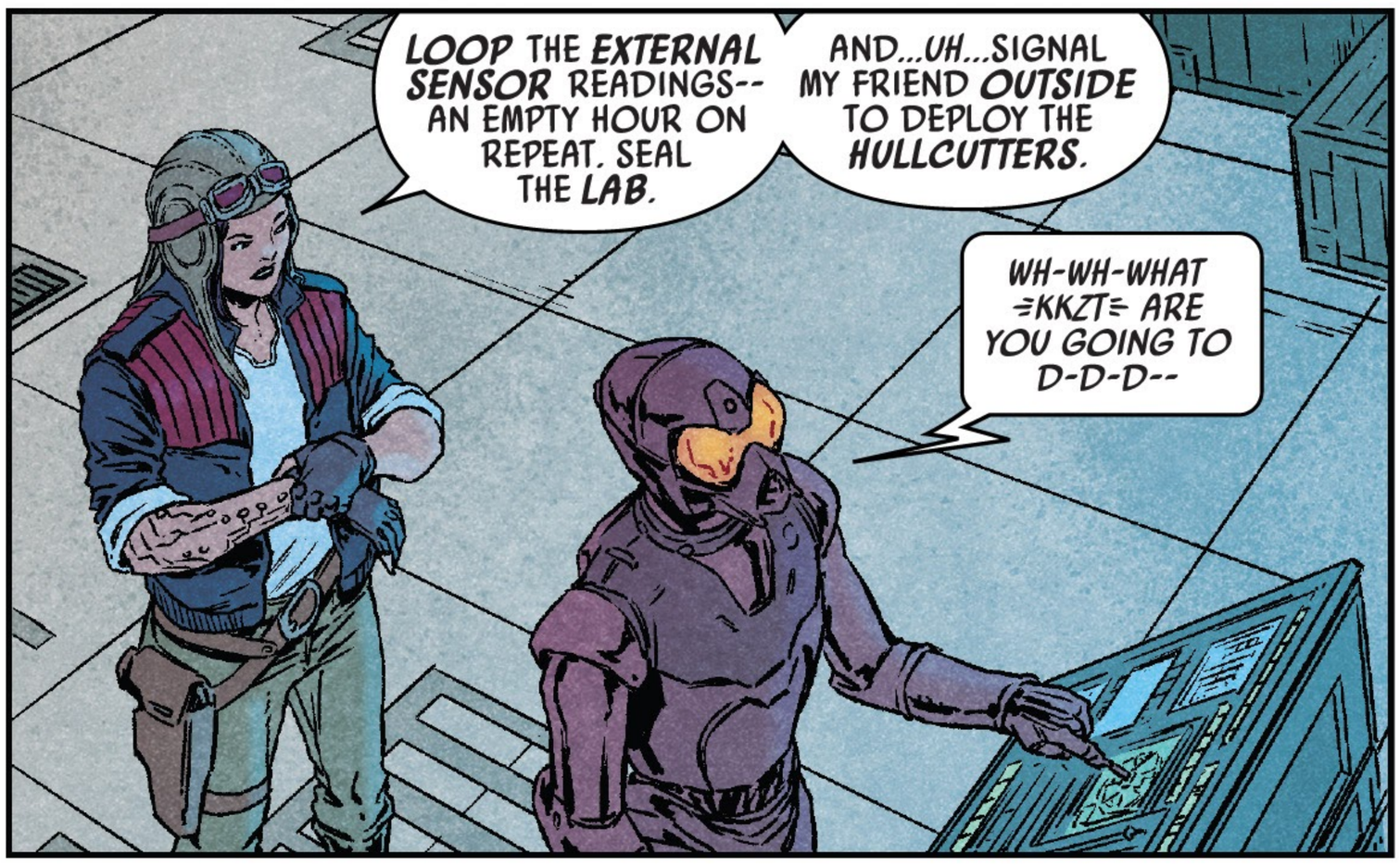
REAL SLICK. YOU'RE *WRONG*, THOUGH.

OH?

IT WAS *THREE* HIJACK UNITS.

ZZZZK





PFT. WHADDAYA THINK?

I'M STEALING MY GUN BACK.

WAY I SEE IT, THE IMPS WON'T STOP GUNNING FOR ME UNLESS THEY'VE GOT A REASON NOT TO.

SO I'M GONNA GIVE 'EM SOMETHING THEY CAN'T REFUSE.

"LONE ARCHAEOLOGIST FOILS TERRORIST ATTEMPT TO ASSASSINATE BELOVED EMPEROR!"

NO WAY ARE THEY GONNA EXECUTE A BONA FIDE H--

SNKT

HERO?
To Be Continued...

DOCTOR APHRA
NEXT ISSUE:

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